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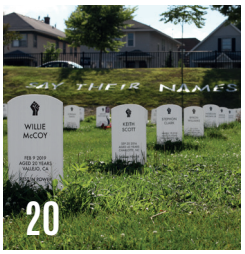

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Volume 26, Issue 659 • August 27-September 9, 2020

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Letters are subject to editing for grammar, punctuation, space, and libel. They should be no more than 300 words. Letters must include name, address, and phone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Priority will be given to letters that refer to material previously published in Lavender Magazine. Submit letters to Lavender Magazine, Letters to the Editor, 7701 York Ave S, Suite 225, Edina, MN 55435; or e-mail <editor@lavendermagazine.com>.

For our Privacy Policy, go to LavenderMagazine.com/resources/privacy-policy

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Printer of Lavender
Schumann Printers, Inc.
920-484-3348

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QUORUM SECTION

Looking south on Chicago Avenue, toward 38th Street. Photo by Ryan Patchin

Can't Close Art

Just as crisis drives innovation—tragedy drives creativity. As our city emerges from the rubble of recent rioting, unrest looms but has manifested itself into mostly peaceful, colorful bursts of expression dotting our city on the mend.

With each boarded-up window came a blank canvas; certain areas have remained closed to traffic in favor of the installations that have cropped-up since the killing of George Floyd. Minneapolis' eclectic response to a tragic event has created its own genre of street art.

The lines between art and vandalism used to be blurry. At least subjective. The vibrant works appearing on building walls and city streets in the past few months have added aesthetic value to their unassuming canvas-hosts, in some cases. With countless hours of cleanup ahead for the city and property owners, countless awe-inspiring and priceless depictions of a time—are likely here to stay.

On paper, Minneapolis' art scene is closed. Very few galleries are open, the theater, concert, and festival calendar is all but depleted. People seem uncertain of dynamic protocols when it comes to gathering—but I say we're open.

Open as ever, in fact. The art has moved from galleries and stages to the street. We're in a moment that has been documented in imagery, and the sounds, smells, and flavors of the places impacted. During my own tour of Minneapolis' new street art-movement, I heard everything from blaring reggae music to Mexican radio from a tinny boom box. I could smell the sizzle coming off the barbecue at Smoke in the Pit, directly adjacent to where George Floyd was murdered.

It was the visual aspect that was most impressive. I was truly fascinated by the impactful imagery displayed through energetic murals and towering installations. The mock-cemetery located near 37th street and Chicago Avenue was especially sufficient in getting its point across.

I was offered water more than once. There are pop-up stands where you can purchase t-shirts, sunglasses, stickers, and whatever else I failed to notice. Hot food from a number of vendors is available, plus you're not far from plenty of other food options, too. If you're ok with a little adventure, this year's art scene is something to see.

So, it wasn't the typical gallery opening or performance that you'd normally see reported. But it was a rich, eye-opening experience, for which I would recommend a deliberate trip. I saw some unforgettable art and saw crowds of inquisitive minds. I had a fantastic lunch. I felt safe. ▮

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

The Squirrel's Tale: It's All Still With Us

There are a myriad of topics from which to choose, but in this time of COVID-19, one is pulled into its own orbit. And beyond. Recently, "Oh, no! A plague-infested squirrel in Colorado!" He's no harbinger of a new pandemic, but the "ping" of a disease of burrowing rodents in deserts of northern New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado, endemic for over a hundred years.

Isolated in groups over broad areas, these infected animals rarely trouble humans, though up to seventeen plague deaths are reported annually. Plague, Yersinia pestis, is continually present at low levels, and can be treated with antibiotics if diagnosed and treated early.

Humans have experienced plague, Yersinia pestis, for centuries, it's been detected even in late Bronze-age archaeological finds. While they remained ignorant of its source or means of treatment, people had some practical experience of how plague and other lethal diseases would run their course.

COVID-19 is new to humanity, and with all the advancements in science and technology there is still much that is unknown—who is most at risk, how are some infected but asymptomatic, able to infect others? Will survivors have immunity? For how long?

Youngsters seemed to be spared—until they were found not to be, and it was further discovered that they suffer other, different damage from adults. Adults who survive lengthy attachment to ventilators have later exhibited a horrifying array of damages to lungs, heart, brain, even the development of blood clots. Measles has consequences that show up years later, and COVID-19's future damage won't be known for years or decades.

The country is faced with damage to the economy, as are individuals suddenly without resources to pay for food and rent. While it is preferable that children be in school with peers—for their educational, social, and psychological well-being—not to mention the breakfast and lunch that many students rely on.

Interviews with medical experts produce pleas for considered, graded responses. Those areas, cities, counties, that have the fewest infections might reopen sooner, with teachers in masks and proper distancing. A state, county, city exhibiting a higher degree of infection, should open with caution, if at all. Pragmatism over politics rather than a pell-mell rush into a single total solution right now. At least one Phase III clinical trial of a COVID-19 vaccine is underway, and keeping on, keeping calm until we see the results may be most effective.

The virus is airborne, recent findings indicating it travels through finer aerosols as well as in droplets, perhaps more broadly and longer lasting. Wear masks when outside or in a public place. Wash hands frequently. Keep a strict social distance from others. These few acts are a courtesy to others, and the life they save may be your own. ∎

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LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES

TAKING BACK PRIDE JUSTICE 4 GEORGE FLOYD DEFEND BLACK TRANS FOLKS

JUNE 28, 2020

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OUR LAVENDER

LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES

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ALBUMS OF THE SUMMER

Moses Sumney. Photo courtesy of Jagjaguwar

Summer 2020 is obviously a little different this year. Normally rooftop bars have parties, patios are full and the gay bars are packed with people just wanting to have a good time. Typically the music that comes out during the summer, or leading up to it, is some of the best we'll hear all year. Below are some of the albums I've been playing on repeat the last few months including some by artists you know, and artists you certainly should check out!

CHROMATICA BY LADY GAGA

Favorite Song: Enigma

Was I going to write about albums of the summer and not start with Lady Gaga's sixth studio album? Chromatica is the moment we, as Little Monsters, have been waiting for. The album is an epic return to her dance roots and the reason so many of us fell in love with her in the first place. Her hypnotic lyrics and pulsating synth-pop sounds have come back into play and will certainly have us dancing in our rooms or our cars. She also included some incredible collaborations including Elton John, Ariana Grande and BLACKPINK.

FUTURE NOSTALGIA BY DUA LIPA

Favorite Song: Levitating

When Dua Lipa performed at the Armory a few summers ago during the weekend of Pride, I knew she was special. Her soothing pop voice and Billboard charting song New Rules had me hooked. Was she going to be a one hit wonder? Could she keep it up with her sophomore album, Futura Nostalgia? Well she did—dare I say it's better than her first album. Future Nostalgia is a disco-themed, dance pop album that has absolutely no skips and a cohesively-perfect set of twelve songs.

Chromatica. Photo courtesy of Interscope Records

SAWAYAMA BY RINA SAWAYAMA

Favorite Song: Comme des Garçons (Like the Boys)

Rina Sawayama is relatively new to many but is quickly gaining a cult following. Born in Niigata, Japan, Rina grew up in London and became a model before making the career shift to being a songwriter and singer. Her debut studio album, Sawayama is an insane mixture of R&B, dance pop, rock and metal. The way she can take so many different influences of music and make them harmoniously fit together is intoxicating, and her second single Comme des Garçons (Like the Boys) is my song of the summer.

GRÆ BY MOSES SUMNEY

Favorite Song: Conveyor

Maybe dance pop songs aren't for you and you want something a little more relaxing? Something you can listen to while biking around the lake or laying on your porch. If that's the case, give Moses Sumney a listen. His voice is rich and smooth with a falsetto that literally made me melt the first time I heard it. His style is heavily influenced by folk, R&B, and jazz which makes it the perfect album to calm your nervousness or anxiety during this time. His voice literally transports you to a different planet, to a time that will finally allow you to get some much needed relaxation. ∎

Reopening ATTRACTIONS

While the world is still grappling with the coronavirus pandemic, many theme parks, attractions, and museums are slowly reopening with proper safety guidelines in place. Before purchasing tickets or scheduling plans, be sure to check out the individual websites for the listed attractions. As the pandemic changes on a daily basis the information below may be outdated by the time this is published.

Walker Art Center.
Photo courtesy of iStock/wanderluster

INTO THE RABBIT HOLE BY STUDIO MOSS:

2327 Wycliff Street 210 Saint Paul, MN 55108
studiomoss.com/into-the-rabbit-hole

Studio Moss, co-founded by Suzanne Casler and Anna Gaseitsiwe, specializes in temporary and semi-permanent art installations and backdrops. At the end of August, they will be opening their new immersive pop-up selfie exhibit "Into the Rabbit Hole." Each traveler is given 45 minutes to meander through uniquely designed spaces that capture a fantastic world of magic and wonderment. The exhibit is set up in The Wycliff, in St. Paul. You can reserve tickets online and research their COVID-19 policy on their website.

Rabbit Hole. Photo courtesy of Studio Moss

The Walker Sculpture Garden. Photo courtesy of BigStock/pink candy

WALKER ART CENTER

725 Vineland Pl, Minneapolis, MN 55403
walkerart.org/visit/visitor-guides

The Walker Art Center is open with a variety of contemporary art exhibits. With various exhibits to explore, there is plenty to see at the Walker, including Don't let this be easy. This new exhibit and collection features work from today and all the way back to the 1970s. Located in Gallery 7 with a focus on female artists, Don't let this be easy highlights diverse selections from paintings, sculptures, moving image works, books and more. For a full list of their hours and new policies concerning COVID-19, you can visit the link above.

Continued on page 16

COMO PARK ZOO & CONSERVATORY

1225 Estabrook Dr, St. Paul, MN 55103
comozooconservatory.org/reservations

A fun afternoon at the zoo is back and ready to welcome families and groups through safe, socially distant practices. To visit, reservations are required for both members and nonmembers. They are still free but this allows Como to limit crowds and keep an eye on their capacity, set at a strict 250 people. Como has also put in a one-way walking path so that groups don't cross over each other. Face masks are required and the zoo is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Como Zoo and Conservatory. Photo courtesy of BigStock/Trek13

Nickelodeon Universe. Photo courtesy of BigStock/sainaniritu

NICKELODEON UNIVERSE AT MALL OF AMERICA

60 E Broadway, Bloomington, MN 55425
nickelodeonuniverse.com/opening

Nickelodeon Universe, the center of the nation's largest mall, reopened in the beginning of August. Some things may look a little different, including only a handful of rides being open. They are offering a special two-hour unlimited ride wristband, available to guests on a first come, first served basis. Passes are available on-site only and guest capacity has been capped at 250. Mall of America has also put in a mask mandate, requiring them at all times within Nickelodeon Universe, with the exception of children ages two and under along with people who have special medical conditions. ▮

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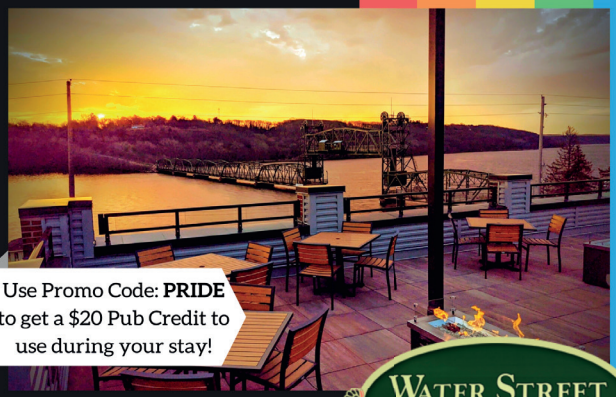

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Chanhassen Dinner Theaters Announces Fall Concert Lineup

Socially distant concert-seating. Photo by Nick Haug

On August 5, Chanhassen Dinner Theatres shared a message with their loyal patrons. Under the guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Governor of Minnesota, many operations at the Chanhassen staple are suspended. This included their performances of The Music Man, which was originally supposed to be their summer blockbuster, running through September. Since then, they have announced that The Music Man will return in early 2021. According to the CDT website, they will continue with Rodger & Hammerstein's Cinderella," after The Music Man closes.

While these performances are suspended, as well as Stevie Ray's Comedy Cabaret, the theatre is still hosting various events including their Concert Series which have moved from the Fireside Theatre, temporarily to the Main Dinner Theatre to maintain social distancing. Guests are still required to wear a face mask when they are not eating or drinking. Below are some that are upcoming:

MTV UNPLUGGED

Saturday, Sept. 5, 2020

Two of the nation's top tribute bands join together to recreate the famous "MTV Unplugged' concert series from the '90s. The original "MTV Unplugged" concert series sold over 35 million records worldwide with over five million of those sales in the United States.

A NIGHT OF WONDER – THE MUSIC OF STEVIE WONDER

September 12, 2020

Wonder fans are invited to this concert tribute by Steveland Hardaway Judkins Morris, where they can jump, dance and sing along to their favorite Wonder hits including, "I Wish," "Higher Ground," "Rainbow in the Sky," "Superstition" and more. With a variety of powerful duets, soothing ballads and his more catchy tunes, Stevie's journey will play out for audience members.

TAKIN' IT TO THE LIMIT – A TRIBUTE TO THE EAGLES

September 16 – 19, 2020

Featuring the Fabulous Armadillos and the Collective Unconscious, these two combined talents will return for an incredible tribute concert honoring The Eagles. Typically, this concert sells out so CDT is encouraging those who want to attend, not to wait before purchasing your tickets.

RIVER – THE MUSIC OF CAROLE KING, JONI MITCHELL & CARLY SIMON

September 25, 2020

Three of the top Twin Cities female singers will pay tribute to legendary songwriters: Carole King, Joni Mitchell, and Carly Simon. Sara Renner, Deb Brown, and Jana Anderson will sing some of your favorite songs by these three women, such as, "You're So Vain," "Natural Woman," "Help Me" and more. ∎

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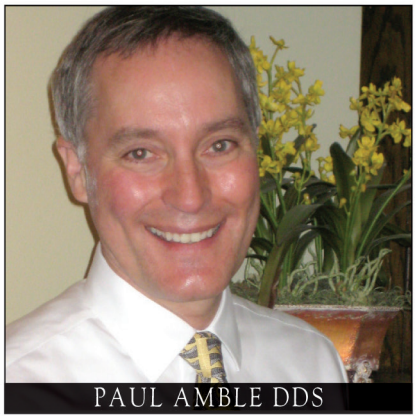

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Looking north on Chicago Ave, toward 38th Street. Photo by Ryan Patchin

The 2020 Civilly-Disobedient Art Experience

By Ryan Patchin

America has faced a summer unlike any other, with civil unrest and a persistently-spreading virus taking over the national zeitgeist. Minneapolis, the unwitting lynchpin to months-long protests, rioting, and demonstrations—has taken a hit.

Surely, you've heard about the wreckage; I don't feel the need to bring it up here. This is about a positive side-effect of *unrest*. You don't have to look far or hard to notice the amount of street art that has popped-up throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Emotions manifest in different ways for different people, and right now a lot of those manifestations are on display.

Who knows how long any of this work will exist, or at least exist in the space where it was initially *installed*. Take the opportunity while it's here—plan a day around it, there's a lot to see.

A mock cemetery rests close to Floyd's murder site. Photo by Ryan Patchin

George Floyd stands tall on the walls of Lavender's former headquarters. Photo by Ryan Patchin

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Art in motion. Photo by Ryan Patchin

Vibrant refeclections on tragedy. Photo by Ryan Patchin

Continued on page

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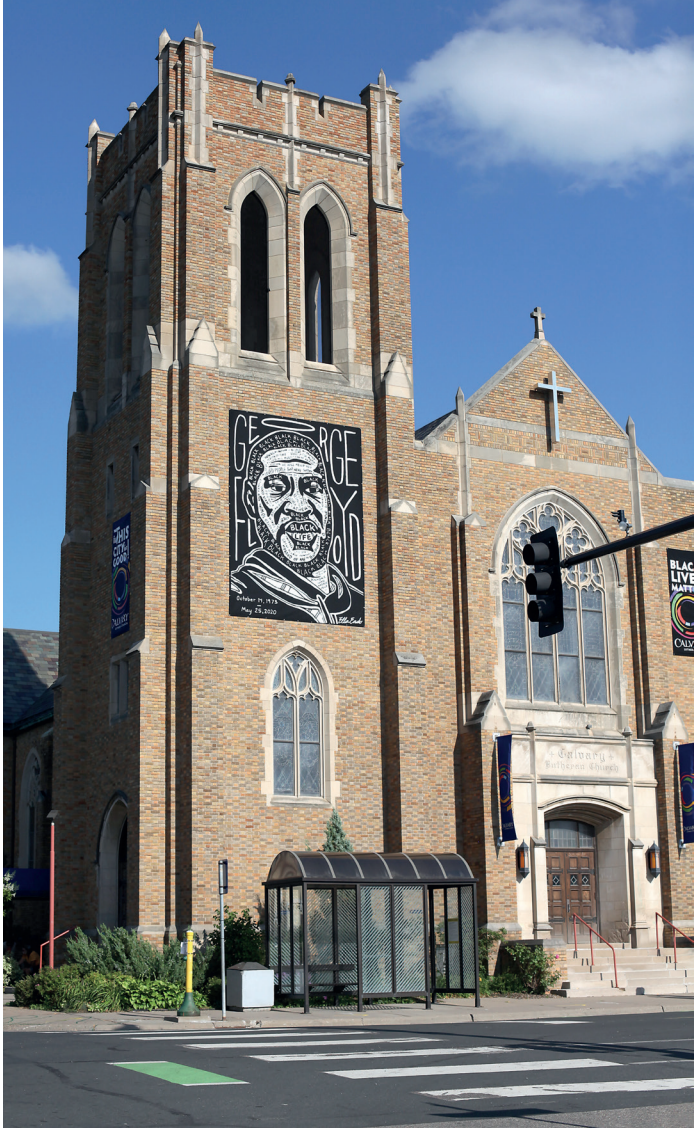
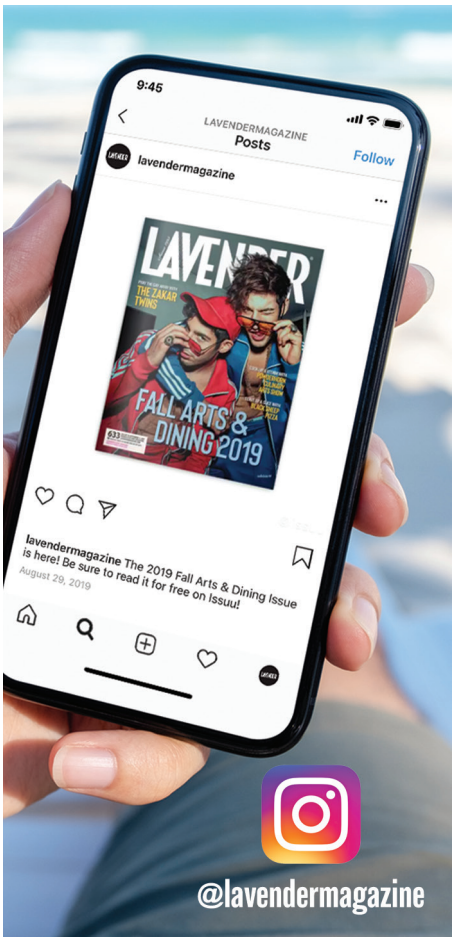


Photo by Ryan Patchin

The now-closed intersection of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue.
Photo by Ryan Patchin

Smoke in the Pit. Photo by Nikki Landis



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Fall Film Round-up

By Holly Peterson

I'M THINKING OF ENDING THINGS – *September 4 – Netflix*

I'm Thinking of Ending Things is Charlie Kaufman's first film in ten years and it looks spooOOooOoky. Based on an Iain Reid novel, this thriller revolves around a young woman (Jessie Buckley) who wants to break up with her boyfriend, but has to survive her visit to his creepy small town first. Drawing heavily on some iconic horror tropes, this is a fun, creepy watch.

Available on Netflix September 4

I'm Thinking About Ending Things. Image courtesy of IMDB

If you're anything like me, you've been missing movie theaters something fierce this year. I miss watching movies with surround sound, drinking specialty cocktails named after the latest releases, and crunching my way through an entire tray of nachos during the trailers. More than anything, I've just been bummed that the impressive roster of 2020 films hasn't been able to materialize at all because the world is closed.

Hollywood is finally giving in—releasing a small portion of fresh content for those of us who are hungry for movies. Here's a small selection of movies to be excited about:

BILL & TED FACE THE MUSIC – *August 28 – Orion Pictures (Theatrical & VOD)*

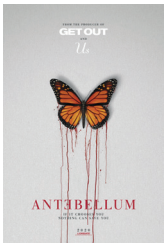
Bill and Ted are back – and they have kids. Keanu Reeves and Alex Winter reprise their classic roles, this time bringing their daughters (played by Samara Weaving and Brigette Lundy-Paine) along for their ride. An epic, colorful, goofy adventure story that pays homage to an old favorite, this is a fun, light romp to chase away any COVID blues.

Limited theatrical release and VOD.

MULAN – *September 4 – Disney+ (PVOD)*

Continuing their run of live-action remakes, Disney now presents Mulan, starring Liu Yifei as Fa Mulan, Gong Li as Xiang Lang, and Donnie Yen as Commander Tung. The trailer promises beautiful stunts, stellar performances, and a healthy dose of Disney nostalgia – with some (hopefully) fun updates to the story.

Mulan will be available for streaming on Disney+ starting on September 4. A subscription to the service is required to make the $30 purchase for the movie. Unlike most PVOD purchases, however, viewers retain access to Mulan for as long as they keep their Disney+ subscription. If you were planning to watch the film multiple times (or were going to buy a family's worth of tickets) the hefty price tag is probably worth it.



ANTEBELLUM – *September 18 – Lionsgate (PVOD)*

Starring Janelle Monae, Antebellum is a beautiful, waking nightmare. After pushing the film's release date back twice already due to COVID, Lionsgate has finally decided to release Antebellum on PVOD, due to its timely themes. A reckoning with race, history, and success, this is a 2020 must-see thriller that navigates a liminal space between modern and antebellum times.

This is an exclusive PVOD release.

KAJILLIONAIRE – *September 18 – Universal*

If you're looking for something to satisfy a craving for the quirky and independent, look no further. Kajillionaire is about a family of three that survives by pulling one small con after another – until they invite the wrong stranger into their circle. Starring Evan Rachel Wood (Westworld), Gina Rodriguez (Jane the Virgin), Debra Winger, and Richard Jenkins, this is a perfect indie cast.

Technically this one is only slated for a limited theatrical release right now, but given Universal's deal with AMC, we can expect to see Kajillionaire on VOD a couple weeks after its theatrical release. ▮

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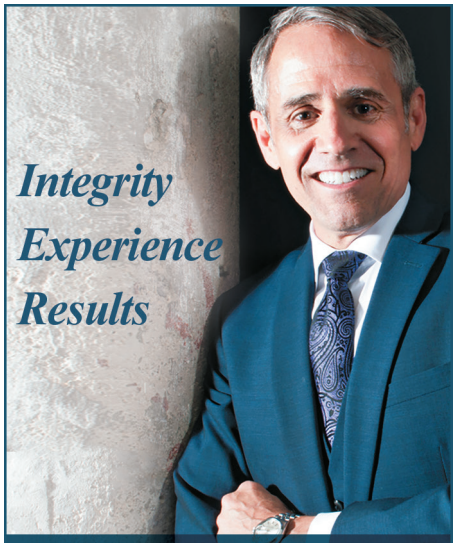

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Photo courtesy of Mike Marcotte

The 'Great Get Together' continues

By Mike Marcotte

The Minnesota State Fair is the second largest State Fair in the country. In 2019, more than two million people walked through the gates over its 12 day run. Although it wasn't surprising, it was disappointing for many when the 2020 State Fair was officially canceled in May due to COVID-19. It was the first time the Fair was canceled since 1946. Although you won't be able to see the miracle of birth while snacking on a pronto pup this year, there are plenty of ways to enjoy the Great Minnesota Get Together.

The everlasting line of people drawn to Sweet Marthas. Photo courtesy of Mike Marcotte

FINE ARTS EXHIBITION OF MINNESOTA

https://www.mnstatefair.org/competitions/fine-arts/fine-arts-exhibition-event/

At the time this edition of Lavender went to print, tickets were still available for the Fine Arts Exhibition of Minnesota. The event, which runs through September 7, showcases artwork selected through a juried competition held earlier this summer.

The curated exhibit is held in the State Fair's Fine Arts Building. You must purchase a ticket for a particular time slot, which can be done on the State Fair's website. Tickets are $10 per person, with proceeds going to the Minnesota State Fair Foundation, the organization responsible for improving the Fairgrounds.

If you attend in person, a mask is required. For those who would like to view the art without attending, the Fair will offer a virtual tour along with a gallery of photos online.

FOOD PARADE

https://www.mnstatefair.org/food-parade-2020/

This year, some will enjoy deep-fried goodness in a drive-thru format. Tickets for the State Fair's Food Parade sold out in two hours on July 31.

The Food Parade includes 16 vendors, including classic cheese curds and Sweet Martha's cookies, along with malts and mini donuts. Participants have the option to purchase from each vendor along the one-and-a-half mile route, which is on top of the $25 per car ticket price.

If you weren't able to purchase a Food Parade ticket but want to experience the event, check out a review and photos on my website, www.givemethemike.com.

Continued on page 30

Customizable Bench. Photo courtesy of Minnesota State Fair

OTHER PLACES TO FIND STATE FAIR FOOD

Not all hope is lost if you don't have a ticket to the Food Parade.

The Blue Barn, located in the State Fair's West End Market, is known for their Chicken in a Waffle Cone, Pop Rocks French Toast, and Blueberry Basil Lemonade. Until September 7, you can stop by The Blue Barn's sister restaurants (The Freehouse, The Lowry, and Longfellow Grill in Minneapolis; Highland Grill and Groveland Tap in Saint Paul; Edina Grill; and 3 Squares in Maple Grove) to enjoy Blue Barn items as dine-in or to-go orders.

I recently chatted with Sara Hayden, owner of Sara's Tipsy Pies. At her booth in the Fair's Food Building, you'll find sweet and savory hand pies mixed with alcohol, including 2 Gingers Irish Whiskey, Finnegan's beer, and Chateau St. Croix wine.

Sara is excited that her pies are available in the freezer section at all Cub grocery stores, along with Lunds and Byerlys. Starting August 23, they will also be available fresh baked in the bakery section at Cub stores.

At Sara's store in Stillwater, you'll be able to try the flavors which were meant to make their debut at the 2020 State Fair, Cheery Cherry and Spicey Reuben, for $5 each.

If you're looking for a particular Fair food, it might be listed on a Facebook group called Fair Food Finder. The page really took off, boasting more than 175,000 members. Posts showcase where food vendors are popping up around Minnesota. They even developed a heat-map. The group is inclusive to all fair-like food vendors, so it's not just foods you would get at the Minnesota State Fair, but also includes vendors who show up at county fairs and carnivals. Because of that, the map and the page are a bit overwhelming.

Continued on page 32

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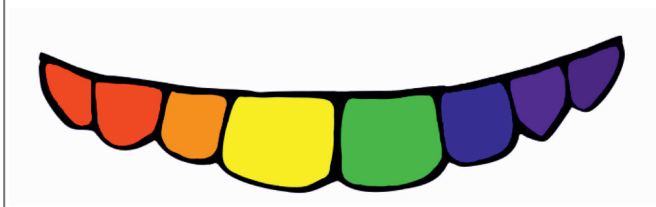

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TRY SPECIALTY BREWS AND BEVERAGES TYPICALLY ONLY FOUND AT THE FAIR

https://www.mnstatefair.org/general-info/specialty-brews-and-beverages/

The Minnesota State Fair is known for a vast list of beverages you can usually only get on the Fairgrounds. That is until 2020. Until September 7, brewers around the Twin Cities will serve a pint of the Fair.

Out in Stillwater, Lift Bridge Brewing Company is selling their ever-popular Mini Donut Beer, typically found at the Ball Park Cafe, along with a Key Lime Pie brew, which is found at Cafe Caribe on the Fairgrounds.

In Northeast Minneapolis, Sociable Cider Werks is serving a Raspberry Hard Cider and a Sparkling Honey Hive, both found at Giggles' Campfire Grill during a typical State Fair.

STATE FAIR MARKETPLACE

https://www.mnstatefair.org/fair-finder/shops/

If there's a product you purchase year after year in the Grandstand, chances are good it's included in an online marketplace with 250 businesses.

You're able to connect with, and shop directly from, many businesses and organizations, including "Project Runway" alum Christopher Straub and Black Lives Matter (both are typically on the upper level of the Grandstand), along with Hagen and Oats (usually found at the West End Market).

GIVE THE ULTIMATE GIFT TO SOMEONE WHO LOVES THE FAIR

https://www.msffoundation.org/ways-to-give/bricks-benches-and-tables/

If there's a fair fanatic in your life, here's the ultimate gift: a State Fair bench or picnic table with their name on it.

There were approximately 1,200 benches around the Fairgrounds in 2019. Benches are organized by the Minnesota State Fair Foundation, the group responsible for the upkeep of the Fairgrounds and its buildings.

One bench costs $2,500 and the donation is fully tax-deductible. To have a bench for the 2021 Minnesota State Fair, you will need to sign up by June 1, 2021.

Each bench can have a 14-character message on the backrest and can additionally have a plaque to commemorate the person you're dedicating the bench to. Business logos can be on the plaques, but business names or advocacy messages cannot be on the backrest.

You get to choose the color of your bench, too: green, yellow, red, or blue. The color determines what part of the Fairgrounds your bench will go. Due to the popularity of the program, you cannot choose the exact location of your bench. During the Fair, fairgoers are encouraged to stop by the J.V. Bailey House on the Fairgrounds to learn the exact location of a specific bench, as the benches have GPS tracking.

Benches have a five year warranty and are stored during the winter months.

In addition to the benches, the Minnesota State Fair Foundation offers bricks that go on the plaza to the east of the Grandstand for $250. They also have picnic tables which can go in one of three zones at the Fairgrounds. Those cost $5,000.

The calories you didn't spend eating cheese on-a-stick and deep fried ravioli can hopefully be used at the 2021 Minnesota State Fair. The 12 days of fun run August 26 through September 6, 2021. ▮

On Mike's website, you will find a list of the most underrated Minnesota State Fair foods, along with the hidden gem foods State Fair officials like best. Head to www.givemethemike.com.

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Eduardo Kobra's The Times They Are A-Changin'. Photo by Ryan Patchin

Mural-sota

By Kassidy Tarala

Walking, driving, biking, riding the train or bus—however you travel around Minneapolis, one thing is for sure: Wherever you go, you'll spot a beautiful mural.

With so many lively music venues, one of the best theater scenes in the country, and a seemingly endless list of museums and galleries, it's certainly no secret that Minneapolis is an artsy city.

I've spent hours wandering the booths at the Uptown Art Fair. I've had a complete stranger type up a poem on his typewriter for me on the Stone Arch Bridge. I've swayed back and forth with a summery cocktail in hand, as bands performed at Walker Art Center's Rock the Garden. I've spent more than I'd like to admit on tickets to the latest Broadway tours at the Orpheum Theatre, or my favorite plays at the Guthrie. I've enjoyed all of the extravagant forms of art that Minneapolis has to offer. But one way to enjoy art in our beautiful city is often overlooked, seldom talked about, and always free: taking in the stories-high murals.

So here's a shortlist of murals around Minneapolis that, the next time you're walking, driving, biking, or riding past, I hope you'll stop for a moment and truly take them in.

WELCOME TO NORTH MINNEAPOLIS – 328 W. Broadway Ave.

As a dedication to North Minneapolis community members who were impacted by the May 22, 2011 tornado that killed one person and injured thirty people, artist Charles Caldwell painted the "Welcome to North Minneapolis" mural on the side of the 4th Street Saloon. The mural features singer Billie Holiday, jazz musicians, and a breathtaking skyline of Minneapolis.

North Minneapolis, a predominantly Black community, is known for its lack of resources and funding, over-policing, and gun violence. But the community is so much more than that, and that's what Caldwell's mural represents. Though the location of the mural is historically a site of many shootings, it stands to represent a community of people who love and protect each other.

The mural, which was funded by the Northside Arts Collective, serves as a "front gate" to North Minneapolis—truly welcoming people to a community rich with art, music, culture, and love.

The unofficial "front gate" to North Minneapolis. Photo by Nikki Landis

TROMP-L'OEIL – 245 Cedar Ave.

Painted on the side of Theatre in the Round, this mural is just as dramatic as the plays you'll see inside. Painted by famous 3-D muralist John Pugh, "Tromp-L'oeil" is the first of its kind in Minneapolis, though Pugh has work in New York, San Francisco, Miami, Taiwan, New Zealand, Mexico, and beyond.

The mural, which is made to look like the brick wall is peeling to reveal a reflective sphere inside, features various people in the sphere, with one person holding it up for the world to see—representing sharing what the Theatre in the Round has to offer the city.

"Tromp-L'oeil," which means "trick of the eye," captures the attention of all passersby—from residents of West Bank, to students biking to class, to folks heading to work aboard the light rail.

John Pugh's Tromp-L'oeil. Photo by Ryan Patchin

Continued on page 36

Pablo Kalaka's mural at Mercado Central. Photo by Ryan Patchin

"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'" – 5th Street and Hennepin Avenue

I bet if you Googled "Minneapolis," one of the first images that would come up would be this Bob Dylan mural, located in the heart of the Warehouse District. Aside from its funky colors and punchy lyrics to Dylan's hit song "The Times They Are A-Changin,'" this mural stands out for its rawness and honesty, seen in the multiple faces of Dylan himself.

To the left of the mural is a young Bob Dylan, probably not too long after he briefly attended the University of Minnesota. And as your eye moves to the right, you see Dylan age.

As he gets older, he looks more tired, but I also think he looks more content. Also, something that has always stuck out to me is the pattern used—the same shapes and colors seen on the face of young Bob Dylan are replicated both on the face and the entire background behind older Bob Dylan. I've always thought of this as a representation of Dylan leaving his imprint on the world—what he felt, knew, loved, and believed when he was young has become part of the city of Minneapolis as a whole.

The mural, both in lyrical choice and use of patterns, is the perfect representation that the times are certainly a-changin', and so is our magnificent city.

MERCADO CENTRAL MURAL – 1515 E. Lake St.

When I think of Lake Street, I almost always think of art. Whether in the form of street paintings, chalk drawings, murals, food, or dance, it seems that whenever I'm on Lake Street, I'm enjoying some form of art. Which is why the Mercado Central Mural is one of my absolute favorites of Minneapolis.

I love everything about Mercado Central. From delicious tacos to indulgent Mexican desserts to one of the best mango smoothies I've ever had (and trust me, I've had many mango smoothies), Mercado Central is a foodie's paradise. But you don't even need to go inside to enjoy Mercado Central. Painted on the exterior of the building is a beautiful, colorful mural, featuring various faces of Latinx people: young, old, and everywhere in between.

The Mercado Central Mural represents what I believe to be at the heart of Lake Street: food, family, love, community, and pure happiness. ▮

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Pastor T from Robbinsdale United Church of Christ speaking in support of our queer community in Robbinsdale. Photo Credit Bob Beahen

Beat on the Street

By Ryan Patchin

Lavender Magazine's quarterly advisory board meeting took place Thursday, July 23, 2020. Members met at Nonna Rosa in downtown Robbinsdale.

The advisory board is comprised of local leaders in the BIPOC community. Invaluable movers and shakers that guide Lavender in making sure we're representing the LGBTQ BIPOC community in a quality, respectful manner. Lavender strives to be a reliable voice where everyone feels they're represented in the pages of the magazine and at Lavender events.

Big thanks to Nonna Rosa for providing tasty and safe accommodations!

Board members in attendance:

[Community Board Members]
Nasir Omar
Zaylore Stout
Beth Mejia
Karri Plowman
[Lavender]
Barry Leavitt
Ryan Patchin

Photo Credit Bob Beahen

Continued on page 40

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Protestors Gather. Photo Credit Bob Beahen.

In Robbinsdale, a demonstration was held to protest gay conversion therapy sessions being held at a local church. Residents of Robbinsdale and surrounding communities stood in solidarity, while peacefully offering support to those subjected to conversion therapy.

"Our objective was to oppose the programming and show support for seminar participants," said Michael Amen, one of the organizers of the demonstration. Pastor T., of Robbinsdale United Church of Christ took to the mic and spoke in support of the queer community in Robbinsdale.

The demonstration was supported by OutFront Minnesota and Birdtown Pride, of Robbinsdale. ∎

Peaceful Support. Bob Beahen

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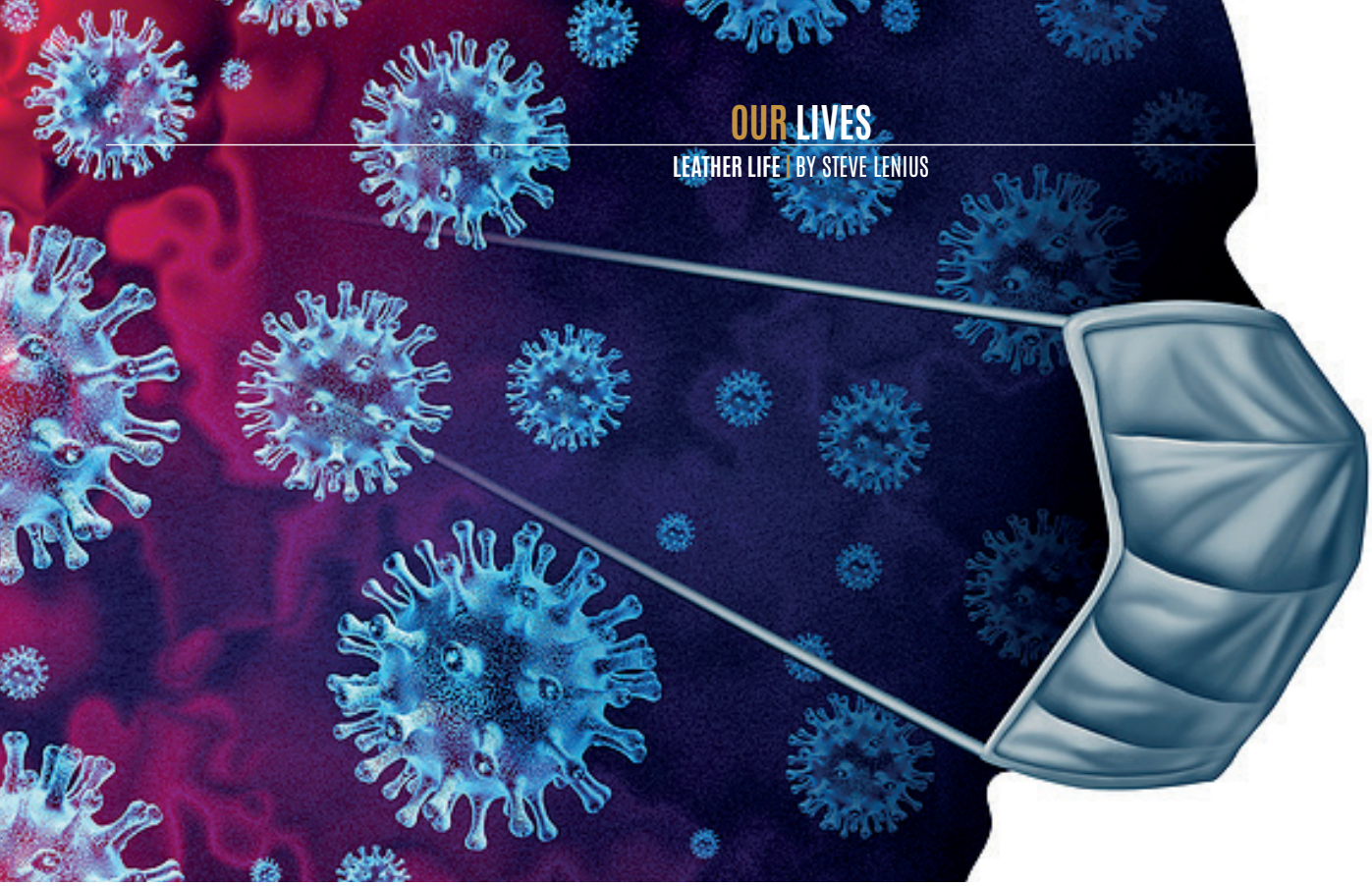

Photo courtesy of BigStock/digitalista

Lessons from AIDS for COVID-19

There are people, including your humble columnist, for whom the COVID-19 pandemic causes flashbacks. Thirty or forty years ago, these people went through something similar: the AIDS epidemic. Kinda been there, kinda done that. Here's what I learned during the AIDS epidemic that I am now applying to the COVID-19 pandemic.

• COVID-19 and AIDS have similarities. Both are diseases caused by novel viruses. That means that no person on this earth has any natural immunity to infection with them; if you're a human being, you are vulnerable. Once infected, there is no cure for COVID-19 and, all these years later, there still is effectively no practical cure for AIDS.

• But COVID-19 and AIDS also have differences. For starters, it's much easier to be infected with COVID-19 than with AIDS. The novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 appears to be highly infectious because it can spread through the air. That means large social gatherings (like parties, concerts or, say, political rallies) can, and have, become "super-spreader" events.

On the other hand, even though millions of people around the world have died from AIDS-related illnesses, the HIV virus that causes AIDS is a fragile virus that is much more difficult to transmit. Blood or semen must be exchanged to transmit HIV—you can't get AIDS from hugging someone or being in the same room with them and breathing the same air. For AIDS, a "super-spreader" event is called an orgy.

• Neither coronavirus nor HIV respect demographics. The coronavirus doesn't respect political affiliations, just as identifying as heterosexual doesn't protect against HIV.

• Fatalism can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Some people reacted to AIDS by being fatalistic. They assumed they would get it anyway, so

Continued on page 44

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they might as well get it over with. Men attended "poz parties" where they engaged in unprotected sex with the goal of becoming infected with HIV. In the same way, the news media today are full of stories of people approaching COVID-19 by thinking, "Well, if I get it, I get it, but this mask is an infringement on my personal liberty." Too often, this does not work out well for them.

• Infection is life-changing—and not in a good way. Even if someone survives COVID-19, there can be major lingering health consequences. In the same way, even after drug cocktails changed AIDS from a death sentence to a manageable long-term illness, life for survivors was vastly more complicated. The medications that treat AIDS often have unpleasant side effects. Another long-term health consequence involves the ability to get health insurance. Many AIDS patients found themselves uninsurable. Will the same thing happen to those infected by COVID-19? At this point, we don't know.

• Disease stigma is an issue. The GLBTQ and leather communities are still dealing with the long-standing stigma that comes with being HIV-positive. In the same way, many people who recover from COVID-19 discover they are stigmatized by others for having had the disease.

• Staying disease-free requires life changes. Some people resist them. Strategies to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection include frequent hand-washing, social distancing and wearing a face mask—all inconvenient and style-cramping. But AIDS required life changes for gay men that were even more style-cramping—like choosing to become celibate. Others of us changed how much sex we had, and what we did sexually, to minimize our risk of being infected with HIV.

When I hear people rail against face masks today, I hear echoes of people railing against condom usage during the AIDS epidemic. Personally, if I was willing then to use a condom to prevent HIV infection, wearing a face mask now to prevent myself and others from getting COVID-19 is a no-brainer.

• Waiting for life to return to normal once there's a vaccine? It might be a long wait. I think it's sobering to realize that even after all these years, there still is no vaccine for AIDS.

• Never mind testing—act as if you are infected and take precautions. Current medical literature says that between 50% and 80% of those infected with coronavirus don't know they're infected. So don't guess and don't assume. Wear a mask to protect others. Maintain social distancing. Testing during the AIDS era was no assurance that unprotected sex was safe, because it could take weeks or months of being infected before the infection would show up on an HIV test. During the AIDS era, "safer sex" meant assuming anyone involved in a sexual encounter was positive and taking precautions to be sure the virus could not and would not be transmitted. We considered every safer sex encounter to be a little victory, a small rebuke to the virus: "Nope, you don't get a chance to spread—not this time!"

Photo courtesy of BigStock/fizkes

• And act as if everyone else is infected and take precautions. Wear a mask to protect yourself from airborne droplets. Maintain social distancing. It works both ways.

• Accept that some things won't be the same, and that in some ways life will have to change. AIDS caused fundamental long-term changes in the gay male community. COVID-19 has already caused many changes around the world in socializing and commerce, and some of these changes may be permanent.

• Acknowledge COVID fatigue. But don't give in to it. The AIDS epidemic was oppressive for the entire gay community, whether you were someone who was infected or someone who cared for and about those who were infected. At the height of the AIDS epidemic, many people were dealing with "funeral fatigue." Having to attend so many funerals every week was psychically numbing, let alone caring for and worrying about all your sick friends who were still alive.

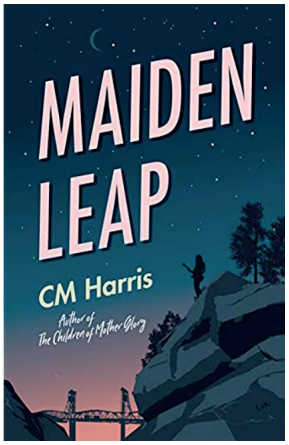
But those of us who lived through those awful times are still here. We didn't give in. We didn't give up. We didn't let down our guard. We changed our behaviors and did what we needed to do in order to survive.

Now it's happening again. I'd like to travel. I'd like to eat in a restaurant. I'd like to go to a bar. I'd like to go to a leather event.

But not if it's going to kill me.

Instead, I will wait to do all of these things until the time comes—and I believe it will—when doing them won't kill me.

And in the meantime, I will keep washing my hands, maintaining a healthy social distance, and wearing my face mask as my small rebuke to the coronavirus: "Nope—not this time!" ▮



MAIDEN LEAP

CM Harris
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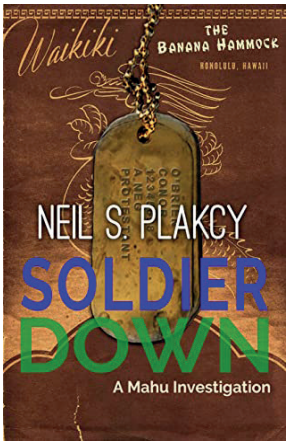
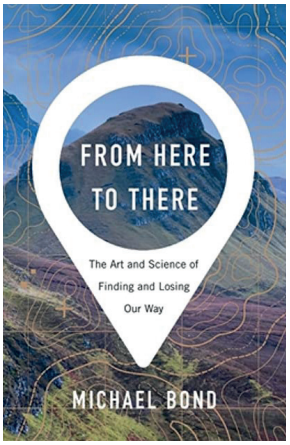
Kate Larson's neatly balanced world tilts when a ghost crosses her path as she Black Friday shops in downtown Wicasa Bluffs. Kate's body returns to husband Erik, son Brace and daughter Sam; her spirit flies to 1985, a sophomore enmeshed with senior Lucy Van Buren, re-living the anger, hurt–and guilt–of parting. Now VeeBee's back; graduate of a gay conversion program, owner of the old manse atop the bluff of Maiden Leap, over which a mythic Indian brave and maiden perished–and a black student more recently allegedly suicided. Love, Kate learns, is many-faceted, if not splendored, and she now has to face and fathom her own heart's desires, past and present, to explore where all their futures might now lead. Complex, witty, moving.



SOLDIER DOWN: A MAHU INVESTIGATION NEIL PLAKCY

Samwise Books
$10.99

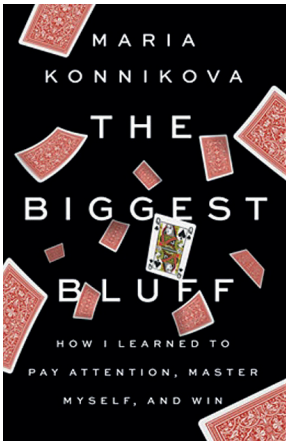
Summoned to Washington, Honolulu homicide detective Kimo Kanapa'aka is "requested" by Rep. Stacey O'Brien to investigate the death of her father, Connor–fifty years ago. Kimo's reluctant, but O'Brien wields substantial financial influence for Hawai'I's eleven military bases, and he was recommended by one of the moms of Kimo and Mike's shared twins. Kimo and FBI agent partner Douglas Jensen learn Connor was killed while on R&R from Vietnam but key information was erased. They uncover more other soldier deaths indicating military cover-ups and gay connections. Will Rep. O'Brien welcome this information? The mysteries intertwine with Kimos' family issues– son's questions of why they haven't got regular moms and dads; Kimo and Mike's continuing to circle around Marriage. Plakcy's 11th Mahu is satisfying and thought- provoking.



FROM HERE TO THERE: THE ART AND SCIENCE OF FINDING AND LOSING OUR WAY

Michael Bond
Harvard University Press
$29.95

Without a keen sense of navigation and spatial understanding of their world, humans wouldn't have survived long enough to invent the GPS. And yet, the prospect of being "lost" is still, these many millennia later, so utterly terrifying and unnerving that people who have wandered off track may behave so erratically they may perish within range of safety. Author Bond covers a wide spectrum of wayfinding from the techniques of mental mapping to the intricacies of our cellular makeup; grid cells, head direction cells, place cells, boundary cells. Bond pleas for children to be allowed to range abroad and map their place in space, then explores the plight of Alzheimer's sufferers' inexorable loss of who-ness and where-ness, and offering some possible suggestions to afford relief.



THE BIGGEST BLUFF: HOW I LEARNED TO PAY ATTENTION, MASTER MYSELF, AND WIN

Maria Konnikova
Penguin Press
$28

Searching for a subject to conquer from scratch? Author Konnikova picked entering the WSOP (Word Series of Poker) not knowing how many cards make up a standard deck. Psychologist, writer for The New Yorker, The Atlantic, The New York Times and others, she has now added "international poker champion." Mentored by Poker hall of Fame inductee Erik Seidel (and other greats), Konnikova draws the reader–and herself–into the Gordian knot of skill, chance, and self-psychology that build the stuff of poker greats. Her keen eye for her own faults and limits, Konnikova learns to face the bluffers from outside and within, always with the knowledge that the biggest bluff is that skill conquers. No. Variance–luck–is always crouching, waiting in the wings. ∎

SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

WEIGHING ON YOU

To a Zoom audience of nearly 100, I asked, "How many white-color parents or grandparents here have ever had a conversation with their new-driver seventeen-year-old son or grandson about how to react if they're stopped by the police?" The goal was to remind that as our country presently exists, this is something that parents of black and brown kids must do. (Also, for the record, I use "white-color" because a whole lot of white people don't believe white is a color; rather, they consider it base or "normal" and consider people with other skin colors "different.")

A white-color woman spoke up. "Yes, Ellie, we've always taught our kids to be respectful to police officers if they're ever stopped." Her answer implied that people of color aren't unique in having this kind of talk with their children. Before I could respond, an African American

Continued on page 50

OUR VOICES

JAMEZ SITINGS | BY JAMEZ L. SMITH

VINYL LIVES (LONG I)

So.
A dead man left his records to me.
His cat clawed them before I could receive.

There's a photo
but I can't find the usb cable.

Which is appropriate
because the analog recording of Al Jerreau,
The Crusaders,
and David Bowie
Are so much better
than the CD
or MP3 download.

God given ass
so much better
than Beyoncé.

Randy Crawford,
Quincy Jones,
and Minnie Riperton

so much better than anything
for which there are no comparisons.

I used to hate Jazz.

Hope the Katy Perry and Rihanna children
will wake up like I did.

If Miley Cyrus and Macklemore
have anything to do with it
you won't.

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I only have a scooter. Where could I park that? And what about a bike?
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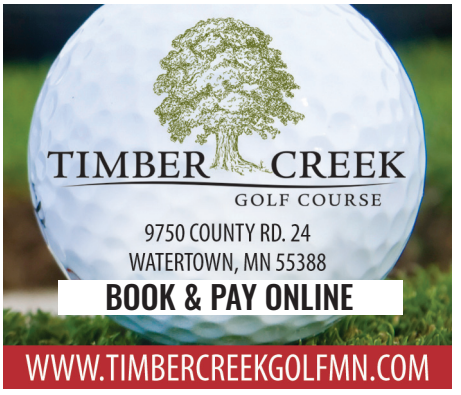

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woman jumped in. "Well," she said, "I have a different kind of talk with my kids. I tell them, 'Your job is to come home alive,' because being respectful isn't a guarantee that they still won't be killed."

Case in point: Philando Castile was incredibly polite to the police officer who stopped him; he even volunteered that he had a legally-licensed-to-carry firearm in the vehicle with him. Less than a minute later, after reaching into his pocket to comply with the officer's order for his driver's license, Philando was mortally wounded with several gunshots to his chest.

The African American woman continued, "I also have a brown eight-year-old in my house, whom I've had to talk to about how he hangs out with his white friends. For example, if he and his friends buy candy at a store, and the other boys start running once they're out the door of the store, he can't run. He'd be accused of stealing."

Please allow me to remind you that this is the America we live in: the rules apply differently depending on the color of your skin. The training where the above occurred is entitled, "Getting Past the Bumpiness." It's about how white-color people often find it very difficult to talk about skin color and racism; after all, for the most part, we're (I'm white-color too) the beneficiaries of a system, that for several hundred years, has put people with white skin at the top of the pyramid—to the detriment of all other humans.

When white- color folks are confronted with this reality, reactions range from anger, denial, shame, guilt, or tepid acknowledgement. Trust me, I'm often walking a tightrope when I conduct this training—it can be bumpy for me as well as for the audience. At the same training, another person asked, "Why are people so sensitive?" African Americans, Indigenous people, and other persons of color have been hearing this lament for generations—the implication being that their emotions around skin color and being "other" are just too inconvenient to deal with. Most white-color folks would prefer to ignore such emotions and simply want to go about enjoying a system where historically, we've called the shots and reaped the benefits.

My response: "If your ancestors had been enslaved or killed or held down for hundreds of years by white-color humans, you'd be pretty sensitive too." The backdrop is that humans have the capacity to take on only so much trauma. At some point, things begin to weigh on you, and when that happens, it doesn't take a lot to trigger an emotional reaction.

Of all the blind spots that a good deal of white-color humans suffer from, it's their inability to understand how things weigh on people who are "other" that holds them back the most. For example, most white-color people rarely ever think about their skin color; indeed, many white people go months, if not years, without considering that they're white.

That's not the case for almost anyone else. Society's near-daily messaging in a myriad of ways has been that if you're black, brown, Asian, Indigenous or a host of other identities, you are lesser. For African Americans in particular, it doesn't matter that George Floyd or Elijah McClain or Breonna Taylor wasn't your kid or relative. Because you carry the weight of two and a half centuries of enslavement and another near-century of Jim Crow, each death of a black person—with the reason for

their death simply being because they are black—is damn personal and a reminder of just how easily this could happen to you or to someone you love.

We saw the results of that weighing right here in the Twin Cities, ground zero for the awakening that America's presently experiencing. At some point, patience and forbearance break under the weight of historical and present-day oppression.

Change is coming. It will be incredibly bumpy but well worth it. ∎

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change *(2013). She speaks and trains on diversity and inclusion topics; visit www.elliekrug.com where you can also sign up for her newsletter, The Ripple. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.*

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